CONTRIBUTION ON QUEBEC
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Made to The January 2-4 1973 Plenum, (LSA/LSO, at Toronto)

At the Political Committee meeting where we had the vote on this resolution (now the "Draft Resolution on Quebec," Bulletin No. 20**)** I made a series of propositions. My **first** proposition — I questioned whether we wanted to project the first part of this document into the League discussion at this time. On the evening that this document was first submitted to the discussion to the PC, the first seven pages were withdrawn. On the second night we were presented with the present version of these pages. On reading them over, particularly in light of the fact that some comrades said that they were not an integral part of the document, but an adjunct to the document, I recommended that this part of the document be laid aside. I agreed that the rest of it be presented as our views on the major questions confronting the Quebec struggle, that the rest constitute the document.

My motion was to lay it aside, not to reject it, or defeat it, just to lay it aside and today I want to deal with some of my arguments as to why I thought it should be laid aside, and why I still think it should be laid aside. I am proposing to this plenum today that we should lay aside the first part of the document. Not that I have prepared a comprehensive critique. I have just a few comments on it. I think it poses problems that are far more complex than perhaps some of us even dream, and I don't think my proposal should meet any big objection from you.

Another preposition I made, my **second,** is that we should rewrite that section dealing with our evaluation of the trade union leadership in the April-May events. I made a few comments about certain aspects of it, after having read it on a crash basis under very difficult circumstances. I thought that this aspect of the document was unbalanced, and I suggested to the comrades that what it amounted to was an attack on our 1968 convention document "Vive le Québec Libre." Following my criticism at the PC meeting I noted that the section of our 1968 document which I said was being incorrectly attacked, had been somewhat mechanically sliced into the draft now before us. You will find this insertion at the bottom of page 28 of the document. I think this is quite a mistaken way to meet my criticism.

As a matter of fact I think it causes more problems than it solves. In our l968 LSO-LSA resolution we explained the situation, and this has now been inserted in the present draft; "Many fundamental criticisms must be made of the policies of the Quebec union leadership. But we must recognize that the (Quebec) union leadership, while it varies in character according to the union in question, plays on the whole a more positive role than elsewhere in Canada – more energetic, more open to rank-and-file pressure, less mired in bureaucratic privilege and

bureaucratic methods of operation. It has repeatedly opened the door to militant and effective class action on the trade union level.

If we were writing that again, I would add some other comments — what the basis of that is. And there are some comments in the next paragraph of what the basis of the differences are between the Quebec trade union leadership in general, and the trade union leadership in the United States or English Canada – the trade union *bureaucracy* in general. 0ne the main reasons of course is the existence of the national question which permeates the entire Quebec left, including the trade union leadership — every layer of the Quebec population.

So, in my criticism of the document, as it was presented to the PC, I stated that I thought this was an attack on the 1968 document which had proven correct and valid, certainly with respect to the Quebec trade union leadership in the May events — that this leadership did prove itself different from the traditional leadership — more able, more militant, more capable of radical action.

And so it would appear some comrades thought, "Oh well, then we'll meet that criticism and plunk that section of the '68 document in the middle." This isn't serious politics in my opinion. As a matter of fact, it puts a tension which is inexplicable into the document. And if I were the person who was drafting the document, if I were comrade *(Alain)* B., I would say No, I don't want that '68 item in there, because it puts a tension in the document and makes it impossible to understand the document.`` I think that is not a serious way to come to grips with a criticism that I want to make of the genera1 theme of the document insofar as it deals with the trade union leadership in Quebec.

The **third** proposition I made is that we should also delete from the draft another section which criticized the 1970 resolution. This section was in the original draft. It has now been deleted from the present version. But I want to say a few words about it. As it appeared in the original draft it dealt with the 1970 document, which we entitled "For an Independent and Socialist Quebec." This section, now removed, expressed a criticism of the 1970 resolution. It suggested that that resolution was so phrased that it stood in the way of our adopting a slogan, which I am in complete agreement with: that is, "For an Independent and French Quebec." Maybe I should read it to you, (from the original draft) because it's been taken out:

''The National Struggle

The aim of the current national struggle against the domination of imperialism, as it is expressed in the nationalist movement today, is summed up in the slogan: "For an independent and French Quebec!" Within the framework of unconditional support of the national struggle of an oppressed people, the Trotskyists must identify with this slogan and incorporate it in their action program, while also formulating demands which give this slogan a concrete, broader content, expressing all the means necessary to a full abolition of national oppression.

The document of 1970 sowed a certain confusion about the slogan: “For an independent French Quebec!” and our attitude to it. The document explained that it was necessary to put forward “the demand for an independent and socialist Quebec” (page 7) stating that “for revolutionaries the demand for independence must be expressed in the demand for an independent, **socialist** Quebec.” (page 27, emphasis in the original).

Rather than this being a “demand,” this is a somewhat simplistic attempt to link the national liberation struggle to our strategic aim which is socialist, in a way that implies that on the one hand our support for national demands is conditional, and that on the other hand independence and socialism for us are perhaps both strategic goals of the same type, and principles for us.

While the LSO is an independentist and socialist organization, political independence for Quebec is not a principle for it but rather a very important democratic demand which we incorporated into our program when it became the concretization of the right of the Québécois to self-determination; the right of self-determination of oppressed nations is a principle for us.

It is not a question of posing the slogan “For an independent and socialist Quebec!” against the slogan “For an independent and French Quebec!” but of integrating the current theme of the nationalist movement into the overall socialist program that spells out the social content of a national liberation struggle in the imperialist epoch which moves towards the creation of a workers’ state.

To do that, we do not place conditions on national demands, by falsely sticking onto them an “explicit class character.” We fully support the national demands that have a1ready been raised by the nationalist movement and those that are necessary for the abolition of national oppression, and we combine them in one program of transitional demands which highlight the vanguard role of the working class in the national struggle.

The action program must provide rea1 solutions to the immediate problems created by national oppression, and link them to a perspective of a radica1 and full transformation of society, beginning with the concrete forms of that oppression.

Our 1970 document presented a concept which I believe is correct, which we have no reason to withdraw. I do not know how much a slogan as “For an Independent and Socialist Quebec!” could be said to have stood in the way of our adopting the slogan “For an Independent and French Quebec!” So in my view, the criticism of our 1970 document first made in the draft version as presented to the PC meeting and now withdrawn, is irrelevant and uncalled for. Above all because we readily accepted, within the framework of the concept that we are for an independent and socialist Quebec, the slogan “For an Independent and French Quebec!” I know I did, and I believe the entire PC did so. We accepted right off the reel, the s1ogan “For an Independent and French Quebec!” and there’s no contradiction embedded in the 1970 document that stands the way of adopting that slogan.

Now, I was not only interested in improving the document, I was very concerned that we

should not make undue criticism of past positions that our collective movement has adopted. There have been — there was in this document, in its first draft, and there now is, in several other documents — a whole series of attacks on previous documents that were adopted as the position of our movement. The Political Resolution contains such attacks. It disassociates itself from the Political Resolution of 1968, and of course, as the comrades know, we are in a very serious discussion about the validity of the document Canada-US relations in 1968. I believe that this type of criticism of documents that have been adopted by our movement is counter-productive. It doesn't serve any useful purpose for the education of' our cadre. These documents, such as we have adopted them, were guides to our work. They could not — and this document won't be able to either — anticipate every development. Our documents should not be seen as running commentaries on events from position to position, but as a projection of a line, some more conjunctural than others; as a stage in the maturing of our program. And I object very much to this continua1 process that is now at work in our movement, and at work in the Quebec document, to counterpose new aspects of questions we want to deal with to the basic concepts of our movement, and all the more when the basic concept has been proven to the hilt — our analysis of the Quebec trade union bureaucrats.

I now want to say a few words about the preamble that I suggested should be laid aside. Comrade S. commented in the process of one of the discussions, that he was not sure what the nationalist movement is, that it is in Quebec, as opposed to some kind of sentiment; that he is not sure that the nationalist movement is on the road to socialism; he's not sure that it's logically on the road to socialism. I think that is a good question, which we have to deal with. I think that the concept that was advanced by several of the comrades at various times; particularly Comrade *(Dick)* F. who came across a statement by comrade Trotsky on the significance of the national struggle in Spain, is a very valid one, and I would like to just refer to it. I don't have the exact quote, but the essence of it is that nationalism is the envelope of the social indignation of the masses. I think that that is a very good presentation of the essential concept we have of nationalism in Quebec. It is not the class struggle, as it is understood traditionally in our movement.

As a matter of fact, I am interested that comrade *(Alain)* B. did make some comments on this. I didn't realize that there was a controversy around this question until I touched the title of the political resolution at a recent PC meeting. The political resolution title was something like – "The Rise of the Class Struggle in Canada." Just off the top of my head I said, "Well, comrades, I don't think that's the best title for this document. I think it should talk about the continuation of the radicalization, because I think that the radicalization is broader than what is normally used to mean, in the Marxist movement, the class struggle. It's part of the class struggle, but many aspects of the radicalization are not to be considered in the normal Marxist meaning of the word as the class struggle. Traditionally when we talk about the class struggle, we talk about the working class struggle against the bourgeoisie. We see the national struggle as broader than that. That's embedded in the term — the **national** struggle. It involves other layers of society, even conservative layers of society who don't have any real class understanding. But in the process of the dynamics of the workers' struggle which is heightened by the national question, these elements can be brought in to identify with the proletarian class struggle.

Another comrade in one of our discussion documents, comrade Marc, in one of the contributions on 'Canada and the Crisis of World Imperialism,' also says: "The national problems are the class prob1ems.' They **are** – in some ways, but they are not totally so. They're broader than that.

Then there is a phrase in the draft document. It refers to Quebec as an "internal colony" of Canada. I suggested to the comrades, when we first started to talk about this preamble, that this was a very questionable formulation, to characterize Quebec as an internal colony — of the Anglo Canadian bourgeoisie, I suppose we would say. I wasn't sure what merit it had. I could see its value in a street corner meeting; as a matter of fact, I've probably used it. It's very dramatic and powerful image, because workers, particularly English Canadian workers can then clearly understand then the real objective conditions confronting the Quebec workers. You start to talk about the conditions of the people in Gaspé and your audience thinks, oh yes, its very similar to what they know to be the conditions of the colonial masses.

But stop a minute; is it the same? What are the tasks of the national liberation struggle in Quebec? (I am not delivering a treatise here; I just want to make a few comments on the preamble and the problems it poses.) Quebec is not Vietnam, of course. There is no agrarian reform needed. There's no need to establish the forms of political democracy in Quebec — they already exist. The demands of the national struggle, in general in Quebec, can be said to be **democratic** demands. Now, democratic demands are extremely revolutionary demands, of course. They can be extremely revolutionary. But why I want to take this up is because of a certain shortcoming in the document.

The document in my opinion doesn't really seriously deal with the PQ, which is the biggest single challenge before our movement in Quebec. In my first contribution in the discussion on 'Canada and the Crisis of World Imperialism' *(entitled)* 'A Step Backward Instead of Forward' (*by R.D.*, *Discussion Bulletin No. 18),* in answer to some comrades' fears that Canadian nationalism could be used against the Québécois, that elements that would **identify** (meaning, to associate with some interest — Websters) with Canadian nationalism would **not** identify with the Québécois' struggle, although there's no substantial evidence to back up that fear — the two phenomena have in general risen (in) parallel in Canada – I suggested that we're not sure how the struggle is going to unfold in Quebec. I pointed out that Claude Wagner, the leader of the Tory party in Quebec, no doubt with the agreement of Stanfield, who possibly will be the Prime Minister of Canada shortly, publicly and unmistakably identified his party, the Progressive Conservative Party, with the right of self-determination for Quebec, including separation from the rest of Canada.

I went on to say that Lévesque, the head of the PQ, claims to have documents that show that the present government, the Trudeau government, is already resigned to Quebec's separation, and the only question is terms. That's what Lévesque claims. I don't think that those claims are without substance, and that the position of Wagner is irrelevant. We have in Quebec a powerful party called the PQ. That party is the political expression
of the independentist sentiment of the Québécois, par excellence, at this stage in the development

of their understanding. It expresses their concepts and their aspirations. To a considerable degree, the national struggle in Quebec has been dampened by the existence of the PQ, and the identity of the Québécois with the PQ, and their confidence that the PQ will deliver the goods. The PQ is an electoralist party. It has a powerful electoral base in Quebec. In fact it projects that it will win in the next elections. I am not acquainted with the nuances of the scope of its influence, etc., but it seems to me to be reasonable to anticipate that the PQ will be elected in the next elections which take place next year.

So, here we have a party which expresses the national aspirations of the Québécois in the electoral arena and projects that it is going to be elected into office next year.

Now, I just want to refer to a few things that the document before us says. This document says: "But there is no evidence that the PQ's dream of independence through a 'cold' process is moving towards realization." This resolution, up for adoption by our convention, **excludes** the cold process of independence; I don't mean what is sometimes called the real thing, **real** independence, but in general, independence. You are not going to get hung up on the question of real independence, which for us, means the nationalization of the basic means of production, etc., etc., but independence, sovereignty, where Quebec will have a parliament, where they will be able to pass legislation. This is what the Québécois think in terms of; they're parliamentarist in their outlook. And I think it's very real to think that were now facing the very real possibility of Quebec independence achieved in the cold way. The document doesn't prepare us for this; but the contrary; it denies its possibility. On page 3, second section, the resolution before the convention says: "Quebec independence, even **if** achieved under a bourgeois leadership, is hardly conceivable;" there's a tortured argument around this question, you see:

"…it is hardly conceivable without a process of political upheavals, and mass conflicts which would strike at the foundation of bourgeois stability. In addition, independence could be an irremediable blow at the viability of the Canadian state, a vital bulwark of world imperialism. It would introduce into the heart of North America a new state formation, led by a feeble and inexperienced bourgeoisie opposed by power(ful) anti-capitalist movements. The Canadian and American bourgeoisies are well aware of the dangers this would pose for them. They aim to combat independence fiercely as shown by the War Measures Act and statements such as that of Trudeau's during the recent federal elections, that, faced with the threat of independence, the use of force would not be excluded."

However that's on the one hand, as the document puts it. On the other hand, it says: "The Canadian bourgeoisie **could** be forced to change its tactics and to grant substantial concessions if compelled to by the development of mass struggles."

On another page, page 6 still in the section I want to have laid aside, it suggests that "independence can only come by armed struggle." A paragraph on page 6 in the middle of the page, says that "Rather than break with the imperialist bourgeoisie" (it's the **Québécoise** bourgeoisie that's who is referred to), "Rather than break with the imperialist bourgeoisie, which would require the mobilization and arming of the Quebec masses, the 'national' bourgeoisie has attacked the workers more fiercely to make them pay the price of imperialist domination."

So the struggle for Quebec independence, which is proceeding in the experience of the Québécois workers via the PQ, it's posed, in this document as requiring the proletarian insurrection. That's what it's posed as. You see, there are a lot of problems in this document.

The national struggle is a **democratic** struggle. I believe the Canadian bourgeoisie are very much aware of the desires of the Québécois. There's no fact (that) the bourgeoisie of Canada and Quebec are more aware of than the independentist desires of the Québécois. They don't need any **more** mass struggles to tell them. (It wouldn't hurt; you know I'm not opposed to a few more.) But they don't need any more. They **know** what the thinking of the Québécois is. It's been established time and time again, and it's very firmly established by the rise of the PQ. How can we seriously project that independence, in the framework and concept that the Québécois conceive of it today, can only be realized… by armed struggle, when the Québécois are moving toward the PQ? How can we seriously say that it's excluded the Canadian bourgeoisie will **never** permit an independent Quebec of some form. How can we say that? I'd call to mind some statements that Trotsky made in "Whither Britain." He stated that the English bourgeoisie will never permit the nationalization of the coal mines; that's the crucial point – the nationalization of the coal mines. Well, comrades, the nationalization has taken place, you know, and the bourgeoisie lined up, as someone said, they queued to get the money that the state offered them for the coal mines — so they could invest it somewhere else. What is the basis for us to say an independent Quebec, in general, could not be established by the **cold** way? I think that this is an extremely questionable line for our movement to develop, and therefore I believe this section the document, without taking up some other contradictory aspects of it, should be laid aside so we can discuss this question calmly and fraternally, and try and resolve this problem.

Now, Comrade V*(Dennis/)V* L. and myself, as members of the Political Committee, voted for the general line of this document. And we suggested, of course, a couple of propositions within that framework — lay the first part aside; take out that attack on the 1972 document which that evening everyone agreed to withdraw; rewrite the section on the trade union movement, but don't make it an attack on the '68 line, which has proven correct by events.

Well, of course, that was not done, except for that insertion of that sentence from the '68 line, So I'm not sure that I could say, now that the draft is before us, that I support its main line.

I don't think that the document is a great innovation though, in general, particularly the basic parts of it, that should cause us to have any doubts about its general character. My criticism of this document is now, even laying aside the preamble and without the changes on the trade union leadership and its role, and without also, making some comments about the PQ and how it's handled in the document, I would say this document doesn't prepare our movement for anything.

Now, I don't know the various problems confronting the LSO branch in Montreal, whether there are some comrades who need to be told you know that there's such a thing as a trade union bureaucracy. A comrade whom I highly respect, in the PC meeting discussion on the

Quebec document turned to me in the course of one of these discussions and expressed pleasure that I recognized that there was a trade union bureaucracy in Quebec and that I opposed it. I assume that the comrades in the LSO have been educated and are well aware of that — that we all understand that there is a trade union bureaucracy in Quebec. And I don't think that they are going to be convinced by an unbalanced evaluation of the May events — that there is a trade union bureaucracy.

That's not how you educate cadre in the revolutionary vanguard. I don't think this document prepares the movement, as I know the problems of the movement, for anything. It doesn't add to our knowledge substantially of Quebec reality. It doesn't clarify any real problems that I'm aware of. In fact, on the national struggle, which is the envelope of the social indignation of the masses it tends to **disarm** us. It doesn't prepare us for the probable PQ election victory and the granting by the federal state in Ottawa many of the forms, if not a great deal of the content, of Quebec independence. I think that is one of the new realities we're going to face too, with the increasing economic integration of Canada with the US. The American bourgeoisie are not going to be opposed to recognizing Quebec independence; it's less and less a problem.

Instead of providing us with realistic politics, the resolution doesn't give us any guide, with the aid of which we can move. It pretends to, but it presents us with formulas, basic fundamental concepts which I think are the common experience of our movement, well rooted in our movement. Even if the formulas are correct, they are so firmly repeated and pronounced that they tend to become a sort of a dogma. I'm a little concerned about them in this respect.

You know, it's like the ultralefts; their constant repetition for our benefit — NDP's a bourgeois party. I heard this elsewhere — the labor party's a bourgeois party; you know, they tell us you have to stand on that. Well, it is a bourgeois party; however, the masses are in it, you see, and there's a problem there; we don't want to get hung up. Lenin called the British Labor Party a bourgeois party in a broad general formulation. But you know, it's a bigger problem than that. The masses are involved in it — in their illusions.

I'm reminded of the ultralefts by the character of this document – that we feel we have to say that the trade unions are reformist, are reformist. But Marx called them schools for communism. We have had this type of argument in our movement. It is a counterproductive type of argument, I think. It doesn't for one thing allow us to correctly understand the trade union question in Quebec and the awesome experiences in the spring of this year where the big three **led** the struggle — they didn't lead it as we would lead it, of course; but they led the struggle. When we talk about the spontaneous reaction of the masses and the secondary leaders leading it, we should note that they got the **go-ahead** from the top brass. The top brass, as the struggle became dead-ended, placed themselves in **jail.** That's what they did; they defied the government, refused to accept any kind of stall or delay, appeal or anything. They said, we're going to jail. And by so doing, they gave leadership and direction to a movement that had become dead-ended; and by so doing took it forward to a higher level. That's leadership, comrades; that's leadership.

Not **Trotskyist** leadership; there are shortcomings to it, of course. But, in many respects, I don't know what the Trotskyists would have done differently, if they had been the Big Three in those circumstances, given all the other circumstances. You see, it's artificial in many ways, because the Trotskyists are what they are; their size, their position in the left etc. because of very good and objective reasons. The trade union brass in Quebec are what they are, also for very good and objective reasons. I'm not talking about the total trade union brass, because it's wrong for us to talk about the trade union leadership as an undifferentiated body. You'll never build a left wing in the trade union movement with such a concept, and that's what we want to do.

As a matter of fact, Comrade *(Alain)* B. said — and this is the basis for my present comments — "we're out to build a left wing." Well, I don't believe we can build a left wing by saying all the trade union brass, root and branch, are all sellouts, fakers, betrayers, renegades, rats; haven't got any concepts whatsoever! I do not believe you can build a left wing in the trade union movement on that basis. You can't even build it on more moderate and reasoned talk, which doesn't really strike a response among the trade union militants. I was looking forward to *(Alain)* B.'s comments today. He talked about the influence of the trade union leadership on the militants. By their actions, they've disoriented the trade union militants, he said. He said that the militants. they're raising their hands, they're writing the books (the manifestos of the Common Front) they're going along with the trade union brass, with the Big Three. Why? And how are we going to break them from it? That's the question. How are we going to build the left wing?

In my opinion it's necessary to recognize the difference of this trade union leadership's role in this big struggle than one could expect from the CLC leadership or the Meany leadership. That doesn't make one an apologist for them. I have heard comments about their subsequent role in November, and if these reports are based on solid evidence it is quite scandalous, of course.

However you have to make a real analysis of the situation too, you see, it's not enough to give a cool picture of a series of challenges before them and say this is where they stand.

The situation in the Quebec trade unions is a very complex one now, since the May events — there has been a big split in the trade union movement. And there are very serious challenges to the union movement as such from the government. And I'm not able at this time to make a detailed analysis of the situation and what compromises are justified. Of course, if you have a fundamentalist position, there's **no** compromise. You know, Lenin wrote his book "Left-wing Communism" against those Marxists who said there is no compromise; Lenin said there are lots of compromises. You need to take the struggle forward, that's what you've got to do. We'll make compromises but they've got to be not in violation of our principles, and they've got to be such as to allow us later to struggle forward. We have to build the left wing in the Quebec trade union movement. We don't have any substantial connections, and we're looking for connections. I don't believe this document, with its unbalanced attack on the trade union leadership in Quebec, particularly on the Big Three who were the focus of the attack of the bosses and the renegades who split the Common Front — I don't believe that will give us much possibility of building the left wing in the Quebec trade union movement, because the Quebec

trade union movement **is** different with its the Chartrands, Laberges and the rest of them.

I also believe that the line of this document doesn't allow us to attract PQers to our movement which is where all the left has gone. This is another fact in Quebec politics. All the left has gone to the PQ, comrades, except us. We don't intend to go to the PQ. But what's our stance in relation to it? You see, I don't think this document gives us any politics.

Of course, of course, comrades, the PQ's a bourgeois party. We took that position from the very word go. I remember the first discussions we had – the discussions with Comrade *(Art)*Y. from the very word go; we said, it's a bourgeois party. Of course, it's a bourgeois party. But you know, as is often said of Quebec — Quebec is a province of Canada but it's not a province like other provinces. Okay, the PQ's a bourgeois party. But it's not a bourgeois party like other bourgeois parties. It's not a labor party — no one has claimed that. But it's a party with a popular base built on Quebec sovereignty, the overriding question in Quebec politics – national sovereignty, independentism. That's the nature of this party. It's got a popular base among the **working** class; yes it really has — among the working class. That's it's essential base— among the working class, with all their aspirations, all their desire to struggle and realize their national independence. How are we going to address ourselves to them? You don't exactly make an address to workers in the PQ with the formula that it's a bourgeois party. And you can't win the followers of the Parti Québécois with a formal counterposing of the labor party to the PQ.

Of course, the labor party remains in our program. It remains in our program. We never took it out. We want a mass labor party of the working class — a revolutionary one such as we projected as possible in 1961 with the NDP. But how are we going to get to it? That's the question. You know who have to be challenged with this? The elements in the PQ. They're the ones that have to be challenged with this. And they're not listening to that demand far a labor party. They have all their hopes and aspirations bound up in the PQ. They think they have one now in the PQ. How are we going to get to them? Well, I was hoping that Comrade *(Alain)* B. would say something about the evolution of this document, which in my opinion is regrettable. At the plenum in January, I guess it was, we had agreed that we would present an "Action Program for Quebec," I believe that was a correct decision. We said, if I can recall some of the arguments, that we have the document "Vive le Québec Libre." We have the document "For an Independent and Socialist Quebec;" these were all addressed to socialists — why socialists should identify themselves with the Québécois struggle. But what we need is a document that directs itself to the independentists, to the independentist masses, and shows them why independentism can only be realized by the socialist revolution, in its full and useful meaning of the term. That's what we agreed we needed. I thought that that was right on. That's the challenge before us in Quebec — to address ourselves to the PQ.

I understand that the comrades, drafting such a program from a short report that was made to the PC, found this an impossible task. I heard the words that we were unable to present an effective program of transitional and democratic demands that would clue into the independentist aspirations of the Québécois. I believe that remains a big challenge before us. We need such a work.

Labor party sloganizing doesn't do that. They've got to learn that the PQ is inadequate and won't meet their needs, their requirements. That's why I suggested in the discussion at the last plenum that what we really needed to do was to counterpose the LSO, as small as it is, to the PQ. These are the contending forces in Quebec; not some projected labor party which is **unreal** politically. In our program, it is unreal. What is really projected for the Québécois, the independentists, is the PQ or the LSO. And that's not unreal, small as our forces are, if we know how to use the democratic and transitional demands of the Fourth International. That could bring a breakthrough.

(You know, comrades, I'm a partisan of the breakthrough theory. I heard Comrade T. the other day and I heard Comrade *(John)* S. talk about this theory of the breakthrough. I'm all for it, because it's my concept of Leninism. Not Pablo's concept of the breakthrough. You put everything in one basket, you see; you focus all the resources of the International in one area; then you cease trying to build the party; and you have some formula that transcends the need to build the revolutionary vanguard.)

You know, the revolutionary vanguard, the LSO, is going to be built in the process of breakthroughs; that's the concept of our movement – campaign politics. We're trying to build a cadre which is going to transform itself through a conjuncture of sharp experiences. When I heard these comrades attacking the break-through theory I said, well, what's happened in Argentina? What happened in May-June 1968 in France? That was the breakthrough for the Ligue Communiste, from a little group of people who conducted themselves right, who remained true to our basic concepts, with the aid of international, were able to transform themselves, and now they are in the process of digesting those forces. And that's what's challenging the Argentine comrades. They think they have a breakthrough. They prepared for it. They didn't capitulate, they didn't sell out or compromise their basic ideas or their concepts. But they knew how to work in the real situation, the real situation that confronted the class struggle there. That's what we're challenged with in Quebec – to learn how to work in the real situation; to learn how to **confront** the PQ, to learn how to move in the trade union movement.

A leading comrade came into Toronto a little while ago and asked me, was it true, as he had apparently heard, that I think that the LSO should **enter** the PQ? It had been rumoured that I was for the entry of the LSO into the PQ. That's absurd. I'm not for that at all. It has never entered my mind. I'm astonished that such a concept could be put forward. I don't believe we should enter the PQ. It's a bourgeois party, and I am very skeptical – at any rate, I know our present forces wouldn't permit us to make such a maneuver even of some grab character. I'm very skeptical that a revolutionary vanguard group could ever enter a bourgeois party. Though I suppose it's not excluded; I'm very skeptical though. All we've known in Canada is entry into labor party formations. And the PQ is not a labor party formation. Besides, we're a very small force in Quebec. But I must tell you that in my opinion, comrades, the forces for the revolutionary vanguard are going to come out of the PQ — the statement in the political resolution which we are discussing today, notwithstanding. That's where the forces of the LSO are going to come from — the forces that are now in the PQ, that are moving around the PQ and that are going to have to be wrenched away from it by our development of a program — and some exemplary actions – which has a high power of attractivity to them.

Just to make a summary comment about the trade union leadership. In the document there's a supplement, a comment about why we are now making this sharp attack against the trade union bureaucracy, and why the '68 document is not good. The statement is: "It's more important now to emphasize the fundamentally bureaucratic character of the trade union leadership in Quebec. In the decisive conflicts, they have clearly shown their inability to lead and the necessity of building a new leadership around a class struggle strategy and through a series of internal conflicts with the present leadership." Have they clearly shown this? To whom? That's the question, you see. Were we faced with an insurrectionary situation in Quebec in May? I hear some of the standards we have measured the Big Three with. They didn't do this, they didn't do that, they didn't do that. Well, of course, from an argumentative point of view it's not impermissible to challenge them on such grounds. But what is the objective situation in Quebec? Are we in a pre-insurrectionary situation? One would almost think so, since the question of arming the masses is posed in these lines of the preamble. How did the working class see the struggle? The class saw the struggle as a tremendous experience which the Big Three led. And the militants saw it as such a struggle. In my opinion, that does not make it necessary to **emphasize** what isn't really substantially true. Of chief significance in the May events was that the Big Three led that struggle. These persons are now confronted with jail, as Alain noted. A big demand on us now is to lead a big campaign to defend them. Unfortunately, *Libération* has not come out since November. But *Labor Challenge* has. And it shocked me, looking over the last couple of issues of *Labor Challenge* that we have not said a word about the defense of the Big Three, who are going to jail. What does that come from, comrades? That they're just trade union bureaucrats?

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